



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## THE YOUNG DOG'S DANCE.

TWENTY years ago the ceremony of the Medicine Lodge, or, as it is commonly but improperly called, the Sun Dance, was one of the most important of the religious observances among many of the principal Plains tribes, such as the Blackfeet, Sioux, Cheyennes, Arapahoes, and so on. Each year, at the time of this ceremony, warriors who desired to show their endurance or bravery, or to fulfil vows that they had made in time of danger, often had the skin of the breast or back cut and strings or sticks passed through these slits. Ropes tied to these strings or sticks ran up to posts in or outside of the Medicine Lodge and were fastened to them, and the men endeavored to break loose by tearing out the skin. Sometimes a buffalo skull would be tied to the string, and the dancer would drag this about until he either broke loose from it, or fainted from exhaustion, for those who went through this suffering neither ate, drank, nor slept for four days and four nights.

The ceremony of the Medicine Lodge was purely a religious festival, in the nature of an offering or sacrifice to the Deity. It was not, as is commonly supposed, an occasion for making warriors, although the counting of *coups*, which took place at this time, of course stimulated the younger men to emulate the brave deeds which the older warriors were telling of. Under the entirely erroneous impression that the Medicine Lodge had something to do with war, the Indian Bureau has issued orders forbidding the practice of this ceremony, and it has now passed out of existence.

It has not been known that this ceremony of the Medicine Lodge prevailed among the Pawnees, but there is some evidence that it was formerly practised by the Skidi band of that nation; and recently Pipe Chief, a member of that band, who must be about eighty years of age, told me the story of his initiation into the Young Dog's Society, and gave me the history of its origin, an account of some of its ceremonies, and of his first going to war after he joined the society.

It must be understood that the Rees spoken of in this story are a branch of the Pawnee family, who now live at Fort Berthold, far up on the Missouri River.

*Atius Tiráwat* is the God of the Pawnees, and some of his characteristics I have already mentioned in another place.

I give Pipe Chief's narrative as nearly as possible in his own language. He said:—

A long time ago, when I was a boy, there lived in the tribe a man

named Medicine Chief. He was lame. When he was a young man he had gone to the Rees and had lived with them for a long time. While he was living with them, he learned from the Rees the story of the Dog Dance, — how it originated.

It is the custom with the Rees in catching eagles to dig a pit in the top of a hill, and to put brush over it, bait it, and then to strip naked and go into the pit and stay there without food, to catch the birds.

A certain Ree brave did this. While he was there at night, he would hear the sound of drums beating, but he could not tell where the noise came from. One night he came out of the pit and went about, listening to see where the noise came from. He found that it came from near a large, deep lake, and he followed the sound to the water's edge. He stayed there all next day, mourning and praying, until the sun went down. When night came on, the drumming began again, and after a little time many birds and animals came up out of the water. He could see dogs, otters, beavers, ducks, and other animals swimming in the waters. He stayed around the lake four days and four nights, mourning and praying. On the fourth night he fell asleep, for he was very tired and had had nothing to eat.

When he awoke he was in a big lodge full of people. Some were dancing, and people were sitting all around the room. Some were sitting on bear skins, some on buffalo skins, and some on dog skins. These were the animals he had seen in the water. They had turned into persons.

At the back of the lodge was a person who spoke to this young man and said: "Brother, we know how poor you feel, and we have heard your prayers, and we have counselled among ourselves, and have resolved to receive you as one of us. You see all these persons in this lodge. They represent different animals. You see me. I am the leader of all these animals, and I am a Dog. Far up in the skies *Attus Tirdwat* has a dog, for he thinks a great deal of dogs. I like your heart, and that is why I have taken pity on you. You shall be like me. Wherever you are, my spirit shall be with you. I will help and protect you. Now I give you this dance that we have been dancing. Take it home to your people, and let them learn it and dance it. It will make them fortunate in war."

Then he turned to the other animals and said: "Brothers, you see this young man, how poor he is. Take pity on him and give him your power, for I have pitied him, and have given him the power that I have."

Then the Owl stood up and said: "You shall be like me; and at night you shall see as I do. Wherever you may go at night, I will

be with you." Then the Owl gave him some feathers from his back, to put on his head.

The Buffalo<sup>1</sup> Bull sat next. He said: "You shall be like me. In all your wanderings my spirit will be with you. Even when your enemy is before you, you shall not be afraid, but shall run right over him." The Bull gave him a shoulder belt of tanned buffalo hide.

The Porcupine said: "You shall be like me. I have power to make the enemy's heart like a woman's. You shall overcome them and kill them." The Porcupine gave him some of his quills to ornament the shoulder belt with.

The Eagle<sup>2</sup> said: "I shall be with you wherever you go. Everybody knows me. You shall kill your enemies as I do mine." He gave him eagle feathers to ornament himself, to tie on his head, and to put on the belt.

The Whooping Crane said: "You shall be like me. I will be with you wherever you go. I know how to scare my enemies. When you attack your enemy, whistle on this." He took one of the bones out of his wing, and gave it to the young man for a war whistle.

The Deer said: "I shall be with you wherever you go. I can run so fast that no one can catch me. You shall be able to run as fast as I do. Take this, and count the coup on your enemies with it." The Deer gave him a rattle, a string of little hoofs, a foot and a half long.

The Bear<sup>3</sup> said: "You shall be like me. Everybody knows me, that I am hard to kill. When the bullets or the arrows of the enemy hit you, you can save yourself. You shall be able to endure even great hardships." The Bear gave him a strip of fur from the roach of his back to wear about his waist.

After these animals had taken pity on this young man, and had told him all these things, he fell asleep. When he awoke he was at the same place where he had lain down, close to the lake. He got up and went home to the camp. When he got there he called some of the young men together, and showed them what the animals had shown him. In these dances this young man did many wonderful things before the people. Any young man who wanted to join this society was taken in and shown this dance, and these things were put on him, just as the animals had put them on the Ree brave.

About this time Medicine Chief was in the Ree camp. He liked this dance, for it was a war dance, but this dance was called "Young Dogs." Medicine Chief was taken in, and received the secrets of this dance from the Ree. So when he went back to his

<sup>1</sup> Symbolized power or force.

<sup>2</sup> Symbolized success in war.

<sup>3</sup> Symbolized invulnerability.

home among the Pawnees, he got up this dance among them. All this happened before I was born.

When I came to know any thing — got to have sense, to be a man — Medicine Chief was the leader of this dance. He was then very old. When I saw this dance, I found that those who belonged to it were great warriors. They were men who had but one heart; they were men who stood foremost by their victories over their enemies; they took plenty of horses and were rich.

I had a friend named Big Spotted Horse (*Ūs-a-wīk-uts*). He belonged to this society, and was trying to get the secrets of the dance from Medicine Chief. A man who wanted to get these secrets had to go through a severe trial, such as dancing and fasting. If he wanted to be a warrior he had to go through the same. While Spotted Horse was dancing and fasting, the Sioux came down to fight us, and we all went out to meet them. Spotted Horse was in the front of the battle, and was wounded in the arm. He had on him all these things which Medicine Chief had brought. Though he was wounded, he rode right over his enemy, and struck him.

After this, and after Big Spotted Horse had got the secrets, he became a great warrior, and every time he went on the warpath against his enemies he would bring in many horses and a scalp. At last he became one of the chiefs.

Now, as Spotted Horse was a great friend of mine, and as I had seen with my own eyes how many great things he had done and how successful he had been, I made up my mind to join this dance, for Spotted Horse had told me that all his good luck came from the secrets of this dance. He said that the Dog which was up above with *Tiráwat* was taking pity on him.

When I had made up my mind to join this dance I went to Medicine Chief, who was then very old, and told him that I was poor and wanted to be taken into the dance, for I cared nothing what became of me, for I was very poor in my mind and had always been unlucky.

On the day I was taken in, there were fourteen others who went in. Medicine Chief told us all to look to the sun as we danced, and at night to look to the moon. The first day, while we were dancing, there were some members of the society who were making shoulder belts; others were fixing owl feathers for the head, others eagle feathers for the sash, and four women were putting porcupine quills on the belts.

There was a great warrior named Pahukátawa, who had struck his enemies many times, and whose duty it was to pierce young braves for this suffering, and he pierced my breast and strung me up. While he was piercing me, Pahukátawa was all the time praying for

me that *Attus* would take pity on me as he had on him. There was one young man in the middle of the dance who had the skin of his breast cut and a rawhide passed through it and tied up to the poles set up out of doors. For he wanted *Attus Tirdwat* to take pity on him.

After two nights and two days of dancing without food or water we began to get pretty thin. All the people were there looking on. The drummers and singers were at the back of the lodge, and the warriors danced in a circle. As the singing and drumming went on, the warriors would get up all together and dance toward the centre of the ring, to meet each other, and as they danced they whistled. They came closer and closer, stooping and turning the head from side to side, like dogs looking. At the end of the song they would straighten up and give the war-whoop and then go back to their places. At certain times in the song, each young man would bend over and dance round and round in one place, whistling on his whistle in time to the song. The older warriors would be cheering on the younger, singing songs of praise and shouting the war-cry as if in battle, and at times they would stand up and tell the deeds that they had performed when young. The women, too, would be making their cry, or singing the songs that encourage the warriors to go into battle. For these dances they used to kill dogs to eat.

The people stood about us looking at us, but where we looked toward the moon no one stood. Now in this dance there were some young men who looked on the bull's head as they danced, for they wanted the Buffalo Bull to take pity on them when they went on the war-path, and some looked toward the sun and the moon, and as they looked toward the buffalo head, or the sun or the moon, they prayed in their hearts as they danced. One of the young men who was looking toward the buffalo head began to mourn, for he saw in his mind that the skull was all covered with blood, which was a bad sign for him. That was why he cried. Medicine Chief told him to stop dancing, and to sit down, and he did so.

I was with those who looked toward the sun and moon, and on the third night, when the full moon was high in the skies, I saw different kinds of hair lariats, such as the Pawnees used to make, hanging down from the moon, and there was one rope hanging down longer than the rest, and at the end of the rope I saw a horse. All this time I was dancing and was jumping up, trying to grasp this rope, and at last I seized the rope that had the horse on it, and held it as I danced.

Now the next day, when the sun was high, I told Spotted Horse to tell Medicine Chief what I had seen, and that I wanted the sun and *Tirdwat* to look on me that day and to take pity on me, so that

what I had seen would all come true. I wanted to prove to them that I was in earnest ; and as I had been taught that the sacrifice of human blood was nearest to *Atius Tirdwat*, I hoped that this blood of mine would be acceptable to him. After I had told Medicine Chief what I had seen, he blessed me and prayed for me. All this time the dance was going on, and the people would shout and the women cheer the young men on. They shouted as if it were in a battle.

Now on the fourth day, which was the last of the dance, I jerked loose from the sticks which were through my breast, and Pahukátawa took me round the ring four times and stood me in front of Medicine Chief. Then Medicine Chief took the buffalo shoulder belt, and while I held my right hand close to the side of my head he threw the belt over me. He had put the owl feathers on my head, and gave me one by one the other things, in the order in which they had been given by the animals to the Ree brave who first received them.

In the Young Dog's Dance, the braves were all naked, and were painted red over the whole body, except that on the face, beginning on the cheeks on either side and running over the forehead, there was a band of black to represent the rainbow, and on the right shoulder blade a half moon in black, and on the pit of the stomach a black ring about four inches in diameter which represented themselves, — their life. Around the joints, at the elbows, wrists, knees, and ankles, black rings were painted. On the top of the head were tied the owl feathers. Over the shoulder hung the belt ornamented with porcupine quills and painted red, and about the neck was the whistle, while each held in his hand the deer rattle.

Some time after the dance was over, Spotted Horse led us about through the villages, dancing, to prepare us to go on the war-path. Then we started off to war. Spotted Horse was the leader. We went way up on the head of the South Platte, close to the Rocky Mountains. There we found a trail leading into the mountains. We followed it. As the trail became fresher, Spotted Horse sent me and another man to go ahead and see where the camp was. We went on, and at length, as we went up over a hill, we saw right close to us a large herd of horses, and away beyond them were the camps.

When we came back and told the leader what we had seen, we held a council as to what we should do. It was decided not to make an attack on the camps, but to drive off all the horses.

At this place we prayed and made offerings to *Atius Tirdwat* and to the sun and moon and stars. After night had come we went down toward the camps of the Cheyennes, and drove off the horses,

—about three hundred; there were many spotted horses and mules. We travelled all that night and the next day, travelling fast, and the second night and day, and then we went slower. On the seventh day we stopped and sat down in a circle, and Spotted Horse put down the sacred bundles and the pipe, and prayed to *Tirdwat*. He told the braves that *Tirdwat* had taken pity on them, and that now they were safe from their enemies, and that now he was going to divide up the horses.

It was the custom with all war parties that those who drove off the horses should give the leader all the best horses in the herds. When this had been done, the leader would call out the name of one man after another, according to rank, and tell each one to go to the herd and take the horse he liked best. He would repeat this until all were gone. But the young men, the servants, were not called so often as the older ones, for one of the older men would get up now and then when a man's name was called, and would say, "That young man has enough." When all the horses had been given out, some had two, some five, some ten, some twenty, and Spotted Horse had one hundred. There were nineteen men in the party. I got twenty-five head.

*George Bird Grinnell.*